

Summary of the 2023 annual report

First- and second-cycle courses and programmes

In 2023, SLU had direct government funding for 4,207 full-time equivalent students (FTEs). This is 186 FTEs fewer than the previous year. The government's objective for the period 2022–2024 is at least 12,600 FTEs. Despite this recent decline, it is estimated that SLU will reach the target.

We had 947 new students registered on first-cycle programmes (not including those run cooperation with other Swedish higher education institutions). This is 40 fewer students compared to 2022.

On our second-cycle programmes, 337 new students were registered in 2023. This is the lowest number of new Master's students during the period 2019–2023. Compared to the 2020 record high of 525 new Master's students, it is a 36 per cent drop.

The number of newly registered fee-paying students was 89, a small reduction compared to 2022.

In 2023, SLU issued a total of 1,215 degrees to 1002 students, an increase compared to 2022 and the highest number for the period 2019–2023.

The expansion of the Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Nursing programmes continued during the year. For the 2023 autumn semester, 155 new students were admitted to 145 places on the Veterinary Medicine programme, and 120 new students were admitted to 115 places on the Veterinary Nursing programme.

Gender equality and diversity among students remain a priority, with training organised for managers in equality and equal opportunities, and for teachers in gender-mainstreamed teaching.

Change in capital for the year: SEK -3 million.

Third-cycle courses and programmes

123 doctoral students were admitted in 2023, somewhat more than the previous year. In the last five years, an average of 110 new doctoral students have been admitted annually.

The number of active doctoral students has remained relatively stable during the last five years, between 565 and 580. About 44 per cent of the active doctoral students have foreign backgrounds.

Doctoral studentship is the most common form of funding; 82 per cent of doctoral students have this form of employment. The number of doctoral students with a research grant (9 students) has plummeted during the last five years. The remainder of doctoral students have other forms of employment at SLU, or with external organisations.

In 2023, the number of degrees was estimated at 105, more than the previous year. The pandemic may have affected student completion rates, and relatively few students graduated during the 5-year period.

Women make up the majority of doctoral students, both among newly admitted students (52 per cent) and active doctoral students (59 per cent). Among the doctoral students who graduated, a majority (61 per cent) were women.

85 per cent of the female doctoral students and 78 per cent of the male doctoral students were employed as such. There are some differences among those not employed as doctoral students, but as the number of students is limited and several of them may rely on a combination of sources for funding, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from these differences.

Research

Our scientific publishing output (articles and reviews) dropped by 4 per cent between 2022 and 2023. Nationally, the number of articles published fell by 4 per cent. In 2023, around 2,200 articles and reviews were published. The share of scientific articles published that belong to the 10 most cited per cent in their respective subject field amounted to just above 16 per cent.

Research and doctoral studies revenue amounted to SEK 3 billion. External funding accounted for 56 per cent of that figure. During the last five years, payments from external funding bodies have increased by SEK 200 million to 1.3 billion. External funding comes mainly from research councils and scientific foundations (SEK 743 million), of which Formas accounted for almost half.

The interest in taking part in the EU framework programmes remains high. In 2023, 92 different framework projects were running at SLU, a top score for the 15 years for which statistics are available. In 2023, SLU took part in over 100 applications for the current framework programme. Roughly half of these targeted the Global Challenges pillar.

In 2023, SLU launched an initiative for regular follow-ups of research infrastructure central to our mission. The purpose is to get a clearer picture of the needs in order to secure good quality and long-term access to this kind of infrastructure in Sweden.

Over the year, SLU also worked to improve the open science aspect of our operations. This includes promoting open-access publishing, improved access to SLU's research and environmental assessment data, and improved support functions for data management.

Change in capital for the year (research and doctoral courses): SEK -3 million.

Environmental monitoring and assessment (EMA)

The long-term trend in EMA funding shows an increase above all in external funding, a reflection of the demand for SLU as a provider of environmental assessment data.

During the year, SLU entered into a new cooperation agreement on the involvement of higher education institutions in the Swedish Institute for the Marine Environment; signatories include the universities in Gothenburg, Stockholm and Umeå, as well as the Linnaeus University and the Chalmers University of Technology.

The SLU National Forest Inventory and SLU's experimental forests celebrated their 100th anniversary by organising several events over the year.

Part of the EMA funding is used to further the development of environmental assessment. One result of this is SLU's environmental data catalogue which was further enhanced and expanded over the year, with information on SLU's open environmental assessment data.

Change in capital for the year: SEK -4 million.

Collaboration

The four platforms SLU Future Food, SLU Future Forest, SLU Future One Health and SLU Urban Futures continue to act as important arenas for collaboration with players outside academia.

The collaboration projects with Uppsala and Lomma municipalities, Region Uppsala, Region Västerbotten, Västra Götalandsregionen and Region Skåne remain in progress.

SLU is taking part in the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's bilateral projects for increased national research capacity in Bolivia, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Tanzania. As part of these projects, SLU supports the running of doctoral courses and study programmes.

During the 2022–2023 academic year, SLU arranged the second round of the SLU Youth Institute in collaboration with the World Food Prize Foundation. The purpose is to raise interest among Swedish youth for global challenges, in particular food security.

The innovation support offered by SLU Holding has seen a positive trend during the year. New investments were made in three companies.

Personnel

SLU's personnel increased by 148 FTEs (5 per cent) during the period 2019–2023. Compared to 2022, the number of FTEs grew by 27 to 3,223. The average number of employees was 4,104.

The number of FTEs among research and teaching staff increased by 3 per cent compared to 2022.

The number of professors fell by 27 FTEs (14 per cent) during 2019–2023. This is mainly due to the fact that since 2013, being promoted to professor is no longer a right.

56 per cent of SLU's 3,223 FTEs in 2023 were women and 44 per cent were men.

Among research and teaching staff, gender distribution has become more even over time; in 2023, the distribution was 51 per cent women and 49 per cent men.

33 per cent of professors were women and 67 per cent were men. SLU has yet to reach the government's recruitment target for 2021–2023 of 52 per cent women. The result was 25 per cent.

The average sick leave was lower than in 2022. Sick leave among younger staff and women has decreased, but the number of employees on long-term sick leave has increased.

Financial analysis

SLU reports a deficit of SEK 9 million for 2023 and the capital brought forward amounts to SEK 699 million, giving a closing capital of SEK 690 million.

The university's finances remain strong. The major share of this capital, SEK 525 million or 76 per cent, can be found in research. In addition, SLU has unused grants of SEK 1,441 million.

Costs for personnel, premises and other operations have increased by 4, 11 and 7 per cent respectively compared to 2022. The increase in personnel costs is salary-related, the increase in costs for premises is generated by index-regulated rental agreements and the increase in operating costs is due to increased activity level and inflation.

SLU enjoys strong external funding with grants and commissions reaching SEK 1.6 billion in 2023. The Swedish Research Council Formas is by far the largest funding body.